

Hindsight is 20/20! Col. 3:1-11

Do our pasts teach us anything? When I am older do I have wisdom because of my age? Does learning come from our mistakes, thus the old saying “hindsight is 20/20?”

Several years ago I was out and about to seek to visit someone in the congregation where I served. I became hopelessly lost and was so desperate and lost that I even violated man-law number 1: Don't ever ask for directions! Ever!! I will say that even with directions I was mostly wandering around aimlessly until out of sheer divine guidance or just that there was nowhere else to go, I stumbled upon the house of the parishioner and reached my destination. You know to this day, I'm not sure that I could find that house, again. Were I to go to looking, I would inevitably follow the paths that led me in the wrong direction. I wandered so long, that the right path evaded me, so I repeat my past “sins” and end up lost all over again. Hindsight may be 20/20 but you need to walk the right path a few times before you can stay on it, and faithfully know where you are going and not keep getting lost.

My feeling is that many, many people whom we run into on a regular basis are not learning from their mistakes “sins” because they are hopelessly lost and can't or won't find their way back to the right and perfect path. What do you think? Paul is talking to Christians here. People who have in the past wandered, but are now walking in the light. He is not preaching Christ to them for salvation, he is preaching Christ to them for life learning, for diligent and purposeful and faithful Christ living.

In the opening verse Paul tells us that in Christ Jesus “you are raised with Christ . . .” In the Greek the word used for “raised” means that we are raised together in Jesus; That we are called together as the body of Christ to desire Jesus, to actively investigate His will and way for us, His people. We are called with every ounce of our being to be with Christ. What does it mean to be “with Jesus?”

Well, we know what it means to not be with him. When we are not with him we are selfish, self-serving, living a “me first” life. But what does that look like? Well, and I'm going to get a little personal here, it means that for many of us men we live the life whose slogan is “he with the most toys - wins.” Or he who can drink the most, tell the dirtiest jokes and have the most conquests wins. Basically living like you were in college all over again. Now I know that hindsight can be 20/20, but some of that former behavior may still lurk in the shadows of our lives and come to life from time to time. That is what

Paul is speaking to this morning. We need to keep the old man buried and dead so that deathly ways do not come back to haunt our lives and cheapen them. For women that old life could be gossiping, back biting, and maybe even living wild and self obsessed ways, not that any of you have or would live that way!! I don't know much about the old life for women. Maybe it isn't much different than men, not really sure. But I do know that if we are in Christ, life, real life is defined by being hidden in Christ, we'll talk about being "hidden in Christ" a bit later.

Living the sinful life is what Paul calls idolatry. What is idolatry? Most of us when we think of idols think of the worship of some physical object such as an image of a bull or a person or some other physical manifestation. And most of us feel far removed from that kind of idol worship because we would never devote ourselves to some carved stone or wooden image. But the idol worship that we don't talk about very often, that may creep into our lives is the devotion or attachment to something that occupies the whole of our life, or at least the majority of our lives. From time to time I ask myself "What in my life could occupy so much of my time that it becomes "worship" something I wholly devote myself to and defines who I am as a person?" How about my leisure time, where and when I go to play; how about my hobbies, the amount of money or interest that I invest in them; how about my work, the devotion that I give to it that distracts me from other elements, vital elements in my life; and I know this is a tough one, but how about my family, can I be so devoted to my family that I neglect Jesus Christ and his call in my life? I cannot answer those "idol" questions for you, but I would like you to do an inventory on your life and where you spend your Time, your talents – the gifts God has given you, and your treasure, the finances that God has blessed you with. And see if there are idols in your life, things you devote yourselves to other than the will and way of Jesus. That is a good assessment for each of us to do from time to time. To help get perspective on our lives.

In our scripture this morning Paul uses the phrase "hidden in Christ" and that got me to thinking about what that phrase means in light of me being dead to my past? The Greek word for hidden is krypto- hidden and also pardoned or covered. Jesus has released us from our past sins and now covers us because of His death, burial and resurrection! He keeps our old life and past secrets in his eternal vault, thus in doing so he gives us the glory of heaven that is found for all of us in Him.

From krypto we get the word Crypt which is a locked vault type grave. Jesus can literally make our past dead to us and kept under lock and key!

The Colossians are being asked by Paul to see the past for what it was and see the present and future for what it can be in Christ. To see their sin and not be lost in it, but exchange the rags of their old ways and walk in the formal glorious clothing of the King.

I know we have become a casual society when it comes to clothing. But we are invited by the king of glory to step into the royal court as princes and princesses. And with that invitation, that transformation into royalty comes a transformation of our wardrobe. The filth of the past is burned up and the glory of the present and future is draped upon us in splendor. Do we see ourselves in His glorious kingdom as princesses and princes?

Hindsight is 20/20 but only when we see our lostness and seek to walk in a new and right direction. Age only brings wisdom when we see the sin in our lives and promise to commit to change and then change by walking in that transformation. Some of us have skeletons in our closets. Sin that we don't think God would or could forgive. We may even be held captive by fear of that sin being found out. Remember fear is false evidence that appears real. I think that bears repeating - fear is false evidence that appears real! But, and this is very important, He will and he has if we ask for that forgiveness, forgive! And when forgiveness comes, all we have to do is accept it. Clarity in our lives come when we walk in forgiveness and accept that transforming power of Christ Jesus and put on the new clothes and wear them in His glorious ways. So that all can see the designer label and recognize the maker as Jesus. And also see us as Jesus' people. Let us walk in the glorious new clothes of Jesus and be seen with perfect Jesus vision - princes and princesses of our Lord and Master! If you do not know the forgiveness that Christ can offer and want to have a relationship with Him or need to recommit to His calling in your life, we ask that you come forward at our final hymn or give us a call so that we can help you come to relationship with Christ and/or become a member of this church.

Please pray with me.